

**REPORT OF THE
JOINT COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION**

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February 1988

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REPORT OF
THE
JOINT COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

House of Representatives

Rep. Annette N. Morgan
Rep. Sheila Lumpe
Rep. Bob Holden
Rep. Neil Molloy
Rep. Rex Wyrick
Rep. Marion Carins

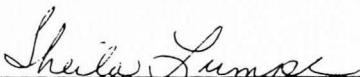
Senate

Sen. Steve Sharp
Sen. Roger Wilson
Sen. John Bass
Sen. Harold Caskey
Sen. Dennis Smith
Sen. David Doctorian

February, 1988

JOINT COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION


Representative Annette N. Morgan


Representative Sheila Lumpe

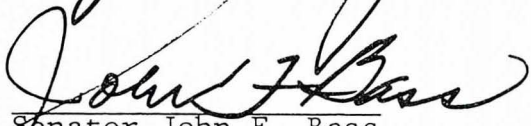

Representative Neil Molloy


Representative Bob Holden


Representative Rex Wyrick



Representative Marion Cairns

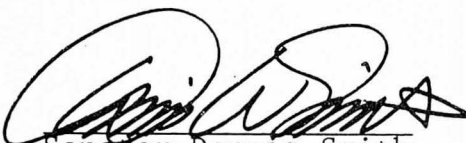

Senator Stephen R. Sharp


Senator John F. Bass


Senator Harold Caskey


Senator Roger Wilson


Senator David Doctorian


Senator Dennis Smith

INTRODUCTION:

In 1984, a Joint Committee on Education was formed and charged with the responsibility of studying the condition of education and the need for educational reform within Missouri's public schools. In 1985, that Joint Committee on Education together with the General Assembly proposed and established the Excellence in Education Act of 1985, a comprehensive reform bill concerning public education. Since that time the Eighty-second and Eighty-third General Assemblies have seen fit to authorize the continuance of the Joint Committee on Education to monitor and study the implementation of the Excellence Act.

The importance of legislative oversight of the continued implementation of this Act to the Eighty-fourth General Assembly resulted in the adoption of House Concurrent Resolution NO. 11 reauthorizing the Joint Committee on Education and charging its members with the monitoring of reform and the continued study of public education. This report summarizes recent activities of the Joint Committee on Education.

I. COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES

The Joint Committee on Education met not only with state agency officials, local school officials, and teachers but with parents and students as well during their study.

On Thursday, May 21, 1987, the Committee met with educators from the southwest region of the state in a meeting held in the Campus Union of Southwest Missouri State University in Springfield. Members attending were Representatives Morgan, Lumpe, Wyrick, Molloy and Holden and Senators Smith, Wilson, R., Caskey, and Wiggins.

October 15, 1987, saw the Committee meeting with the State Board of Education in Jefferson City. Attending this meeting were Representatives Morgan, Holden, Molloy, Cairns, and Wyrick and Senators Wilson, R., Sharp, and Caskey.

Concerns of educators in the St. Louis area were expressed in a hearing held Tuesday, November 10, 1987, at McClure Senior High School. Attending were Representatives Morgan, Lumpe, Molloy, Holden, Wyrick, and Cairns. Senators

attending were Sharp, Caskey, Smith, and Doctorian.

Kennett, Missouri served as the hearing location for the committee on Wednesday, November 11, 1987. Representatives Morgan, Molloy, Holden, Wyrick and Cairns attended as did Senators Sharp, Caskey and Doctorian.

Bryant Elementary School, Kansas City, Missouri, acted as host for the Committee meeting held Tuesday, November 17, 1987. Committee members present were Representatives Morgan, Holden, Molloy, Wyrick, and Cairns and Senator Caskey.

The Committee was assisted at each of these meeting by Anne Walker and Carol Stonefield, education analysts from the House and Senate research offices. Additionally, Drs. Terry Stewart and Otis Baker from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education attended meetings, provided information and answered question regarding implementation of the Excellence in Education Act.

II. SUMMARY OF COMMENTS, FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Views of the State Board of Education and The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education:

In addition to monitoring activities of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to ensure that the act is implemented as intended by the General Assembly, Committee members served as participants on advisory committees formed to assist in the design and development of the act's implementation. These activities helped acquaint committee members with personnel of the state agency and state board.

During the meeting with the State Board of Education the Committee learned of the Board's plans regarding funding requests for the Excellence in Education Act and the Foundation Formula, and discussed the Board's selection criteria for a new commissioner. They also met recently appointed members of the Board and discussed the necessity for evaluation of the Act. The Department presented an outline for a proposal for the evaluation of the Excellence in Education Act.

Responding to this information, Chairman Morgan emphasized that evaluation is critical to making informed decisions about programs, their continued authorization and funding and their impact on improving education in the state. Discussing the need for credible, unbiased and objective evaluation the Joint Committee informed the Board

Board that as effective school research and the best advice available had been used to draft the Act they recommended outside evaluation, in addition to the department's ongoing data collection and evaluation, to establish reliable education indicators.

The State Board informed the Committee of their budget request for \$750,000 for 1988-89 for evaluation of many department programs including those from the Excellence Act. Chairman Morgan informed the Board and Committee members of the possibility of the state becoming a pilot for a model evaluation program being proposed by the Center for Policy Research in Education (CPRE) at Rutgers University, if certain matching funds could be raised.

The Committee received compliments from the Board on the work of the General Assembly in developing and passing the in the Excellence Act. The Board particularly liked the Incentives program and felt that the recent veto of funds by the Governor had hurt the continuation grants under this program.

Views of Educators and Citizens:

Incentives for School Excellence

The popularity of the Incentives program was echoed in all of the hearings held by the Committee. Educators called for more Incentives programs and other programs aimed at improving instruction.

Career Ladders

The reviews were mixed on the Career Ladder program. Districts that are participating in the program seem very pleased. However, many districts informed the Committee that they cannot afford this program as they cannot fund the local match portion required under the program. They suggested a reduction in the required local match, perhaps at the 50/50 level as a fairer proposal.

The Committee found that while nearly all districts and teachers participating in the career ladder program have developed professionally rewarding and educationally sound plans, monitoring of the districts' plans and teachers' plans will ensure participants fulfill their obligations.

Minimum Salary for Teachers

The Act required a minimum salary of \$15,000 for full-

time teachers during 1986-87, with that minimum increasing by \$1,000 per year until it reaches \$18,000 in 1989-90. The testimony presented to the Committee was positive about this program. Although some salary compression was noted by those testifying, it appeared that the strongest criticism came from the smaller districts where the intent of the legislation was at least partially misunderstood. Through the minimum salary provisions, the legislature intended to raise base salaries and to attract quality individuals to the profession. Other legislative actions such as increases to the school foundation formula were intended to enable districts to increase experienced teachers' salaries so that they would be properly compensated for their education and years of experience.

The first set of Rules and Regulations promulgated by the department regarding the minimum salary was brought to the attention of the Committee as these rules compounded the problem of compression of salary schedules. After meeting with the Committee and at the request of the Committee the department has revised the rule on minimum salary so that compression would be lessened. This rule will be promulgated January 19, 1988 and receive public comment for thirty days.

Principal-Administrator Academy

Without exception, districts that testified regarding the administrator academies were enthusiastic about this program. The importance of inservice training of school leaders was stressed. The Committee was pleased to be informed of the development of regional academies designed to meet the comprehensive needs of administrators and to provide ongoing programs.

Testing Program

Under the Act, local districts must have testing programs to measure student competency in the subject areas of English, reading, language arts, science, mathematics, social studies and civics. Key skills within each subject area were required to be developed by the department to provide a foundation for the local school district's testing program. Local districts were required to offer criterion-referenced tests (CRT). The purpose of a CRT is to determine whether the individual child has mastered what has been taught. This then enables the teacher and the district to direct attention and resources to areas of the student's deficiencies. The legislative purpose of establishing key skills, developed by the department as "Core Competencies and Key Skills" (CCKS), was to identify skills upon which continued learning can be built.

To implement the testing requirements, the department and the Missouri Testing and Evaluation Service developed criterion-referenced tests based on the

key skills developed by the department and an advisory committees. This linking of key skills and the criterion-referenced test format culminated in the Missouri Mastery and Achievement Tests (MMAT). Although not required to use the MMAT, all but approximately six districts are currently using the MMAT to comply with the law. The program of pupil testing generated the most controversy and concern presented to the Committee. One of the strongest concerns expressed to the Committee was that the use of state-identified criterion referenced objectives is usurping local control and leading to a state-mandated curriculum.

In response to the concerns raised across the state, the Joint Committee strongly reemphasized that the legislature did not intend that the testing program and the requirement that districts use criterion-referenced tests be used to compare school districts, compare students, evaluate teachers or mandate a statewide curriculum. Use of these tests for any other purpose subverts the intent of the legislation and the effectiveness of the test to serve as a measurement tool to help teachers assess whether students have mastered the material they have been taught. Additionally, movements to use the test for comparative purposes diverts the energy and attention of educators and creates fear and anxiety among them.

The Committee continued to remind witnesses and representatives of the department that were present that the legislature specifically designated that the test information could not be released by the state department; that districts could select or develop CRTs distinct from the MMAT and could select the grade levels at which the test would be administered. To accomplish this the legislature directed the department to conduct annual random sample testing of students statewide to determine how a particular grade level was performing in any one year.

Given that the original and only purpose of the CRT was to diagnose the individual student and that the random sampling was to provide comparative information, the Joint Committee recommends against releasing individual or composite scores. Furthermore, the Joint Committee request that the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education explain thoroughly to the Joint Committee and the public the procedures they are using for random sampling.

The Committee advised the department that misuse of the test could lead to loss of legislative support because of the negative impact on local districts.

As a parallel caution, the Committee recommends against the use of the tests for evaluation of teachers. Commenting that the state requirement for performance based teacher evaluation does not include the use of student test

scores, the Committee noted that such scores are invalid measures of teacher performance. Use of the tests for the purpose of teacher evaluation is counter to the intent of the legislation.

Relating to the area of testing is the development of key skills and core competencies (CCKS). CCKS was developed by statewide committees of teachers and teacher educators. These individuals formed four committees; each committee specializing in a discipline area. For approximately one year the committees wrote objectives and test questions. These test questions were subsequently assembled, field tested by the department, and revised based on teacher and student comments from the pilot phases. This process was inclusive and an attempt to arrive at a consensus as to the skills that are necessary within "core" courses of study. For many districts these skills represented what currently was being taught.

An undertaking of this size and complexity requires constant updating and revision. After one year of implementation several problems have become obvious - one of which is that of sequencing, particularly in the areas of science and social studies. The Joint Committee recommends that the state department reconvene these particular subject area committees - now, not after the MMAT and CCKS have been in place five years as suggested by the department - for review of the tests and key skills and other emerging problems. The Committee transcripts of testimony presented during its activities are available for the reconvened subject area committees to use. In addition, the Committee recommends that further advice from other teachers within local school districts and educators in those discipline areas be sought. The Committee suggests further study by the reconvened committees to review the key skills and the test questions regarding: their relevancy, currency, balance within and between subject areas and grade level appropriateness. Sequencing problems within the test could be minimized by repackaging the tests into four separate and distinct tests (language arts, math, science, and social studies). This flexibility would allow testing to match the grade level where the skills are taught. It would also assist in reducing the time necessary for the testing process and minimizing disruptions of the educational process. Small group testing, with few disruptions and seriousness of purpose, might resolve some test administration difficulties.

The Committee reiterated for the benefit of educators, administrators, and department personnel, that the law provides that districts may use the state test, purchase commercial CRTs, or create their own. Seven districts in the St. Louis area have pooled their resources and contracted with McGraw-Hill to develop CRTs specific to the needs of their districts and specific to their curricula. This is an example

of the law working exactly as the legislature intended. The Committee urges other districts to contact these seven districts and replicate their activity if they do not wish to use the CCKS and MMAT.

Non-Excellence in Education Issues Presented

Also expressed to the Committee were several areas of concern that relate to education programs or activities that are not programs specific to the Excellence in Education Act. These concerns and the Committee comments and recommendations follow.

(1) The Instructional Management System (IMS) advocated by the department can generate excessive amounts of paper work. Many districts have found ways of eliminating some of that paper work yet other districts are experiencing severe problems in this area. The Committee recommends that the department identify districts using IMS with paper work reduction plans and ask them to assist districts using IMS with paper work problems.

(2) Current proposed rules by the State Board in the certification requirements would require a mentor for each beginning teacher as well as some other provisions recommended by the Missouri Advisory Council of Certification for Educators (MACCE). Problems of cost, management, loss of teaching time by mentors, and so forth, should be reviewed carefully. The Committee recommends districts contact MACCE members to make them aware of these concerns as well as respond to the proposed rule by sending comments to the State Board in Jefferson City. The Board should extend the comment period to allow for input from those concerned.

(3) Concerns relating to kindergarten starting dates and assessment for early admission were presented to the Committee. The Committee noted that several bills have been introduced this session dealing with these issues. The Joint Committee recommends that review of these bill by the House and Senate Education Committees should include review of testimony presented to the Joint Committee.

CONCLUSIONS

In general the Joint Committee is pleased with the implementation of the Excellence in Education Act to date. Although educators appear troubled over the testing program after one year's implementation and urge review of the program, the Committee is sensitive to these concerns and apprehensions that often accompany change and new programs. The Committee will continue to oversee the implementation of the testing program and give special attention to these problem areas. The Committee will endeavor in every way possible to see that these tests are used only for the purposes intended. The Committee appreciates that the education community is quick to alert policymakers to problems of implementation and is willing to work cooperatively to resolve any such problems.

The Joint Committee, in an effort to continue cooperative monitoring and oversight of the Excellence in Education Act, plans to request a meeting with the State Board at one of the Board's next regularly scheduled meetings.

The Committee is aware of the unresolved and continuing issues surrounding adequate funding for our public school system. We believe the citizens of this state want to be better than average and as yet financial "averages" are still an elusive goal in Missouri's educational reform. In this light, during 1988 as the Committee continues its study of education it will also focus on all of the sources of money for our public schools.

Most importantly, the Committee reminds educators and policymakers alike, that reform is a long-term process which requires commitment and patience. The goal through passage of the Excellence in Education Act was to put in place a public school system that would provide qualified teachers delivering quality education to Missouri students. This "excellence in education" would prepare our students to be productive citizens in the 21st century. Oversight and evaluation are critical to knowing whether citizens, educators, and policymakers working together are moving toward that goal.

The Committee has compiled a notebook containing letters received by the Committee, and written testimony submitted to the Committee. Among these many documents are letters from teachers, local school board members, parents and administrators. There are also copies of surveys conducted by the Conference on Education and the St. Louis Cooperating School Districts. Additionally, the Committee has compiled a set of cassette tapes of the hearings conducted during the interim. The notebook and tapes are available for review and are located in House Research.